

# OLD CAPTAIN.

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**M**Y grandfather was born somewhere in the south of England before our American Revolution—small information for any of his descendants who may wish an ancestry, but all Old Captain, as he was called, ever gave. There was a story that his father shipped the wild lad with some hard old sailor to be licked into shape by the cat. Whatever his reason for entering the trade, grandfather stuck to it from liking, taking foretop, fore-castle, and rope's end with the grim gayety of a born sailor. Some think he

rose because it would never do to have a bigger man in fore-castle than aft, but my opinion is that quick wit had more to do with his promotion. Anyhow, he was mate at eighteen: at twenty, captain, and "of as good a brig as ever kicked the waves," he used to scream at my dreamy self with savage scorn.

How those gray eyes of his, that touched my summer visions like a snow, could have lit with love I cannot understand; but love he did, and that his ship-owner's daughter. As the girl seems to have been

as little warmed at first as I was by his later looks, her father, heady as himself, took her part, and made a sorry time, and my—I hope not sorry—story.

The dear old lady of the gentle face, who used to sit all day in the little window's sun and tell me stories wonderful, must have been a fair maid. Grandfather's mad action was, perhaps, as much her beauty's fault. He certainly made it and his love excuse for incessant devotion, following her everywhere, elbowing other suitors out of the path, compelling her, in his masterful way, to act as if betrothed, when her real emotion was shy wonder, and even fear of him. Sometimes such emotion passes easily into love, and would have done so in this case, no doubt, if her father had not met grandfather's savage love with as savage opposition.

"Look you here, young man," he cried, one afternoon, as grandfather left the house, "why come you every day?"

"To see your daughter," grandfather glowered.

"She would see less of you, sir."

"And I more of her; and you shall not hinder me."

"Shall not hinder you!" the ship-owner echoed, wrathfully. "And who are you to say shall not to me?"

"I am captain of the *Sally*, sir," grand-

father bowed mockingly; and straightening up, "the best man in your service." His modesty was ever of a stunted growth.

"Best or worst you may have been," the ship-owner sneered, "but you are no longer either in my service. I discharge you, sir. Your mate shall captain the *Sally*." With that he banged the door.

Another would have thought this ended the matter; but nothing ever ended with my grandfather until it ended his way. The *Sally* was to sail the day after the morrow to America, and though he found the mate—no friend of his—in charge of ship next morning, he did not shift a plan. Whistling some ranter's tune into such strange jerks and quirks it seemed to jeer its own solemnity, he strolled the fields in search of his reluctant maid, who passed her days among their flowers, and finding her in some nook or other, said he would walk with her that night.

"My father says I am to have nothing to do with you," she pleaded, frightenedly.

"But I love you, dear," grandfather smiled; "and love is sweet ownership of everything lovely; stronger than deed, or bond, or father's will."

"Your love is not sweet," she whispered, her eyes upon the ground.

"I will sweeten it, then," and stoop-



ing, he lightly touched her lips with his. I think she cried at that, but she promised to meet him at sundown.

You may be sure the red was not out of the west before grandfather kept the tryst. He had spent the afternoon alone in the tavern common room, occasionally slanting his eye toward the *Sally*, but otherwise seemingly absorbed in chasing that pious ranter's tune into as many holes and corners as his whistling lips could find.

"Takes her easy," his landlord whispered to an old graybeard of the *Sally's*

"You like weddings," he smiled, whimsically, "so do I—this one above all."

"Whose wedding is it?" she interrupted, suspiciously.

"Ours," was the bold answer.

"Who ever heard of such audacity!"

"You heard."

"Yes, and I ought to leave you instantly."

"But, instead of leaving, will marry me to-night," he said, kissing her.

Why she consented, lovers must explain. It was not grandfather's insistence alone that won her, I am sure, for I



crew; to which that worthy responded, with great solemnity,

"A sailor-man always do."

He might have qualified this remark had he seen grandfather scowling at the ship-owner's residence two hours after dark. No one did see, however, until a door somewhere in the rear opened and closed, and his maid slipped through the trees and looked at him across the gate. There was no moon, but the tall stars lit her face as she lifted it, with attempted bravery, to oppose the walk—bravery belied by a breathless "I cannot."

"Cannot," grandfather laughed as he unlatched the gate, "is one word, or two, as you look at it. I read it two to-night—one of which is can, the other, not. Can, I appropriate with yourself; not, we will leave your father." By this time he held her hand, and they were walking toward the parish church and vicarage. "I forgot to say this morning," grandfather continued, lightly, "that we would go to the wedding."

"Wedding?" the maid queried, her voice full of soft surprise.

saw a boy equally positive with a maid the other day, and she only scoffed. Nor was the witchery in kisses, for that boy kissed his maid, and she clouted him. Perhaps it was the moon; or, if a lover's moon be full, some happy conjunction of the stars; or the birds had crisscrossed the sky that day in proper fashion for a lover's fortune. I know there is magic in the art of love.

The vicar was less manageable.

"Never do! never do!" he declared, when grandfather told his errand.

"Why not?" grandfather bluffly asked.

"There's the father, for one thing."

"What has he to do with it?"

The vicar's narrow eyes opened at this, but he only put his objection another way:

"The maid is not of age."

"I am," she answered, quickly, reddening a moment after for her forwardness; but examination of the parish register confirmed her by a day, to the ungallant vicar's discomfiture.

Next it was the banns; no one could be married in England until the banns were read.

"I will read them, then," grandfather scornfully replied. And seizing a vagrant paper, blank of writing as his young bride was free of sin, he drawled the usual form, exactly imitating the clerk's sing-song, even to inarticulate sighs, vocal twists, and solemn cough when done.

"Well read," the vicar softly laughed, "but hardly lawful."

"No!" grandfather flashed. "By England's law you cannot marry us, but by God's law you shall."

Nowadays a man would take his maid without the blessing of the Church. There were some who did such things then, but Old Captain, fiercely careless as he always was of men's opinions, was tremendous stickler for God's things. "What are you," he continued, hotly, "God's priest or England's? Or do you part yourself to each? If so, that which belongs to God, stand up and marry us!" It was awful politics, and doubtful theology, but grandfather was so big and threatening, the scared vicar obeyed, spared the registering, grandfather saying what God had joined would not be tighter for that article.

Every wedding has a journey, if no farther than across the road; but grandfather had planned a longer, gayly exploited now to the bride of a quarter-hour, as he led her down the quiet street toward the docks.

The *Sally*, loaded and full manned, had dropped half-way down the harbor early in the evening, and only waited the return of her new captain, who was having a last interview with the ship-owner, before she hove anchor and put to sea. A single boat bobbed up and down in the restless water of the slip. It was the captain's gig, and without a moment's hesitation grandfather set his wife in the stern, and jumping in himself, ordered the two sailors in charge to pull away. One of them was the graybeard of the inn, grandfather's favorite man, the other, a new man, just from drinking bout; and they obeyed without question, Graybeard blinking solemnly at the stars as he swayed back and forth upon his oar, the new man disconsolately grumbling at the dryness of the sea.

The dim-lit town, except for an occasional song and boatman's whistle, was still as midnight ought to be. Stars flecked the water with their waving images, and across the hills a soft wind

idled, damp with dew, and smelling of the earth. A sob or two, stopped by as many kisses, was all either sailor heard in their quick row to the *Sally*. Under her side, grandfather ordered oars up, and line, and a moment later all were on the deck.

"Now, my hearties, get your anchor!" was his first command. "If any man see wrong in that," he harshly laughed, at their doubtful looks, "he may swim ashore for better."

"Are you the *Sally's* captain, sir?" the new mate, grandfather's old second, ventured, with humble twitch of forelock.

"Ay," grandfather replied; "she's my wife's dowry." And he laughed again, this time, softly, to the little woman shrinking on his arm. "Now get away, my boys! Grog all round to the bride's health, if we pass the outer light in an hour; if we don't," and he glanced over his shoulder at two dim figures coming slowly down the dock, "the devil!"

Every man saw as much as he, but, without another word, fell into the venture, and hove at the anchor with such hearty will that, by the time Old Captain returned from showing his lady to her cabin, it was up and fast, and the *Sally* sliding out of port in full sails, to the mad astonishment of the day-old captain and the ship-owner on the wharf. They crossed the bar by the half, and inside the hour drank in the light-house gleam to the captain's bride, to him, and to the voyage. Next day the last cape dropped into the sea. They had good weather, and no harm; and in four weeks, their honey-moon, the *Sally* tied up in Boston Harbor.

Boston had been the original destination of the *Sally*. Old Captain never thought of other port. He may have felt doing the very thing he would not be expected to do the safest escape; or self-confidence made him think he could carry any venture through; or he did it in sheer delight of madcap adventure; or, with the great simplicity of such men, he did not realize that anything had happened to change original plans. Going to Boston certainly deceived the ship-owner; it also simplified Old Captain's business, his apparently straight papers arousing no suspicion in port officers or consignees. He delivered his cargo, as he had others to the same parties, taking moneys therefor as always, and accepting the usual

hospitalities—more profuse this time, in honor of his wife.

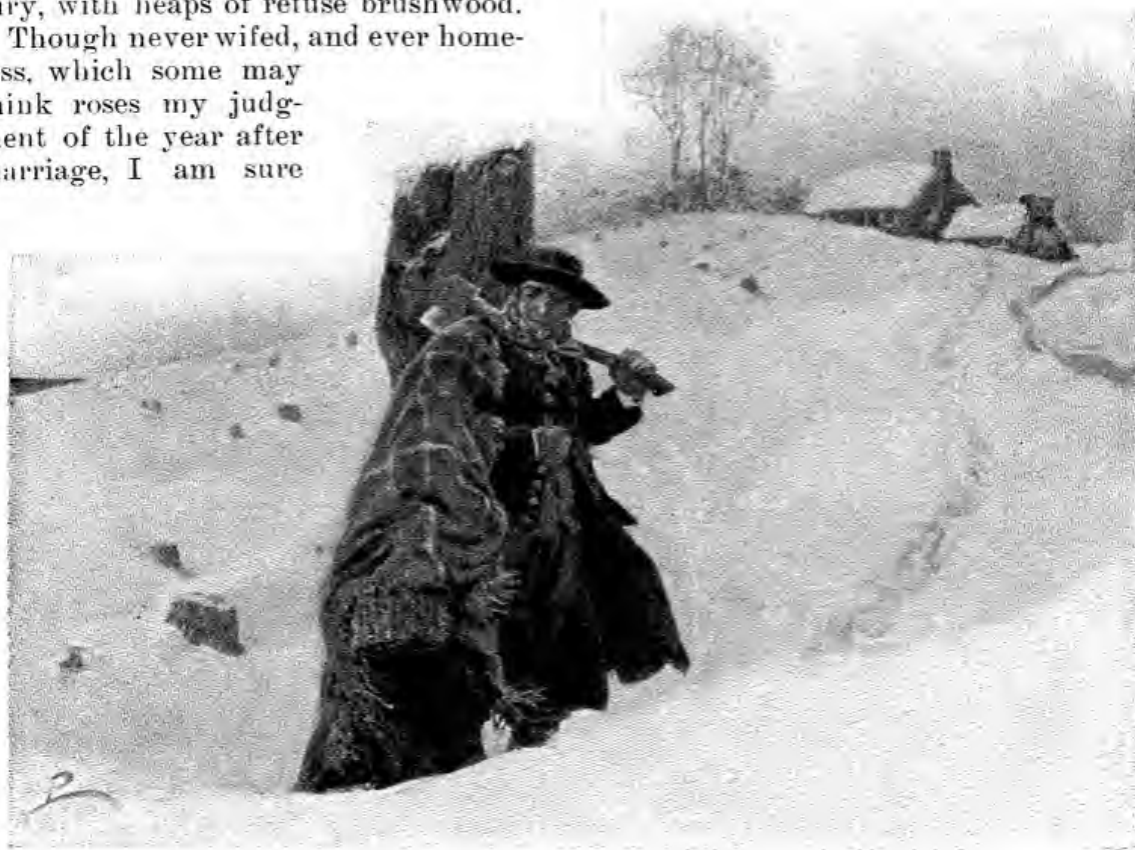
Hearing much of Maine, which was being settled by Revolutionary soldiers, and minded to go there, Old Captain discharged all the *Sally's* crew with double pay, none of them consenting to so tame a venture, and refitting for coaster trip and emigration, sailed again, crewed by a number of those restless spirits of whom America is always over-full, and passengered with wives and children. They stopped often on the way, but never landed until they reached the Bay and Three Foxes. Liking this wild land, grandfather picked its single jewel for his wife and colony, anchoring one August day in our pocket of a harbor.

He builded in the middle of the island's slope, instinctively aware the maple roots digested vigorous farm-land, hewing the great trunks into roomy lodge, shingled with pine from the sandy western point, now named for him. Before the following spring their axes had eaten great holes into the forest, piled, in their settler's fury, with heaps of refuse brushwood.

Though never wifed, and ever homeless, which some may think roses my judgment of the year after marriage, I am sure

wind and sea together: but the moss-chinked walls, hung with stuffs from the snug *Sally*, and floors piled with bearskins, helped by great fires lit in wide-throated chimneys, kept them warm, gray night and day. Housed with such comfort, in the dim light of those old-fashioned nights, that gave the fire a chance to rosy-paint a cheek and left the room corner for its gentle ghost, the two would sit, and softly talk of those common things which sweeten life, or in a softer silence.

I cannot understand how a slip of a girl, torn from her rootage in parental life and suddenly transplanted upon a husband's unknown heart, can live, less grow, but she does; and grandmother, after the days of wilt, when tears are easy in the eyes and lips quiver at life's un-usuality, clung to grandfather, his strength, so rough to us, being her protection. The grim old demon's gentle speech to her sounds queer in my ear's recollection, much as bull would singing, but it was always his manner to her. I sometimes



those first winter days in the settler's lodge were the happiest of grandfather's life. The solemn storms brought much snow, and cold that froze sky and

think he was afraid of her, not as men commonly fear, of course, but as the bull might fear a startled lark.

That spring, the child she had carried

all winter underneath her heart was born—my father, her first born, and the island's. They baptized him John in water drawn through the first ice-crack in our little harbor, Old Captain saying salt water was the proper thing for sailor's son. Since then it has been a family custom, every man child of our wandering race "passing through the sea," as grandfather named the rite.

Soon after the baptism, Old Captain sailed the *Sally*, refurnished and provisioned, on his first voyage out of North Haven, carrying fish and lumber. The island was soon out of sight, but long located by pillars of blue smoke from the brushwood fires, which those left behind set the same day to clean the ground before they mattocked its rooty soil for their small planting of corn, potatoes, and sown barley. Boston was again the voyage end. There he reloaded with general stores for the West Indies, and back again with sugar and molasses, gathering everywhere his own cargo for North Haven, which was ready with home harvest in the early fall.

So Old Captain passed eleven years, wintering on the island, summering in Southern waters, the tough old sailor not trying to keep himself at one temperature, after the new fashion, but choosing the two extremes. Once he had fever, but

over him like a little ghost, but he opened his eyes with such a smile she soon forgot. A sailor's wife must forget, or there would be no sane sailor wives.

Meanwhile the stumpy clearings were becoming little farms, cultivation and the humble growth of wild things softening the rude gash of man's first touch of nature. There were more children in grandfather's and other homes, and on the highest hill a few stones for the dead.

Late in the spring of 1812 Old Captain sailed for Havana, carrying shooks. Calling at Boston, for some purpose, he was delayed by dirty weather, and lay two days alongside an Englishman of thirteen guns. There had been impressments and an embargo, but the *Sally* had minded neither. If a vessel chased, she sailed away. Deceived once by a vessel asking water, Old Captain lay to for a boarding party; but when the lieutenant asked if he had any British seamen, he knocked him overboard and bore off.

Nothing passed between him and the Englishman, and he took his watch below, the second night, without alarm. An hour after the cold end of a pistol barrel thrust against his face startled him into consciousness. The cabin was full of men from his neighbor, among them Graybeard and half a dozen others of his original crew, with the lieutenant



wrote home regularly, in lucid intervals, of perfect health. Once he danced with Hatteras three days in a storm, but told his wife he had not lost a sail the voyage. Once she saw him knocked overboard in our harbor by a boom. It took four hours to get the water out and life into him, but all he said was that a sailor-man must have occasional pickling to keep. Grandmother was dreadfully frightened, bending

of previous acquaintance at the other end of the pistol.

"I have seen you before," Old Captain said, taking in the situation without raising an eyebrow. The lieutenant flushed, but only demanded the captain's papers.

"My papers are for myself and the proper officers," said grandfather, hard as steel.

"Very well; read mine," and the lieu-

tenant handed him a warrant authorizing any English officer to take one Captain Crabtree, of the brig *Sally*, anywhere on the high seas, in England, or the colonies, and bring him before the admiralty for barratry: signed and sealed.

"This is not high sea," Old Captain objected, soberly, seeing the only loophole, and realizing its insufficiency.

"It is high enough to-night," the lieutenant laughed. "The irons, men!" and in a trice grandfather was bound and taken to the Englishman, accompanied by two-thirds of the *Sally's* crew, "who ought to make good English sailors," the lieutenant sneered.

Eleven years had brought the *Sally's* owner no consolation for the loss of ship and daughter. He had dinned the admiralty with his injury until half the navy was on the lookout for his brig. Many times her unconscious master had sailed out of the jaws of capture, his very unconsciousness, such is the nature of tricky human luck, being greater safety than precautions. The lieutenant's first interview had been a piece of guile for Old Captain's inveigling, abruptly spoiled, as we have seen. But tricky luck would

not be the fickle jade she is if she were partial with her favors—and now she smiled on the lieutenant.

Old Captain was chained between decks to the mainmast, a single seaman with buckled cutlass standing guard. This done, and the *Sally's* men distributed among the watches, the two ships left the harbor at the first easing of the gale in each other's company, a crew from the Englishman navigating the *Sally*.

If Old Captain minded the dubious situation he did not show it. He ate his grub from a pan between his knees with as hearty relish as if off the captain's table. The sailors stood their guard in terror, teased into choking with fury at his jeers. At night he leaned against the quivering mast and slept as soundly as in the *Sally's* cabin.

He soon discovered that the officers of the Englishman were ignorant of Graybeard's and his companions' connection with the *Sally*. All of the men had stared at him in the *Sally's* cabin with solemn unconsciousness, and passed him with apparent indifference after he was aboard their ship. He fell into their mood at once, and when one happened



to be assigned his guard, jeered him impartially as the others, but by no accident touching anything relating to the *Sally*. Finally the duty fell upon Graybeard. Seating himself upon a

powder-keg, with his cutlass across his knees, that worthy looked straight into Old Captain's eyes, and blinked.

"Your glims are weak, old man," grandfather sneered.

A blink.

"How are your ears?"

A blink.

"Half blind, stone-deaf! The press gleans fine these days."

A blink.

"Gathering straw here and there, sometimes whole bundle dropping from ship-tail."

A blink.

"Getting this way, with a score of rebel Americans, a crew of rascals."

A blink.

"Why," and grandfather looked so deep into those blinking eyes there was no corner in them, or in the great soul beneath, he did not see, "if I, the next time you stand guard, should crack these chains and cry, 'Your captain and the *Sally*!' half this crew would mutiny!"

A solemn blink.

"The fools!" grandfather shrilly laughed, and, without another word, fell back against the mast and slept.

Graybeard's next night on guard was dark as pitch, and made no lighter by an apparently accidental falling of the ship's lantern, as he hung it in the beams above the prisoner's head. As it fell, Old Captain leaped, and straining mightily against the mast, snapped his chains. When they broke, the cry, "Your captain and the *Sally*!" rung through the ship. Knocking a dazed man into the stanchions, Old Captain and Graybeard sprung on deck, to meet half the crew shrieking the cry deliriously. Before the startled other half found their wits, a cutlass at their individual heads made good sense of submission.

The cabin had to be stormed. Grandfather's awful blows, his arms bit into agony of passion by the broken chains, soon drove in the door, and they rushed through, unmindful of the ripping bullets. In half an hour the unwilling living had taken Old Captain's place below, and the dead were in the sea.

At dawn the *Sally* was brought to by a shot across the bows, her watches rearranged, and the course of the two ships changed for North Haven. Old Captain's intention was never known. The island would have been no refuge. Possibly he

sailed for his wife, planning another home in farther seas. This is only guess, Old Captain himself pacing the quarter of his new vessel in gloomy silence. Every sail was crowded on the spars. The ship was put into spickest fighting trim, all of the faces of the men slowly turning into iron reflections of the master's. There was no singing and little talk. The luck or folly of their deed belonged to all.

The fight occurred in mid-ocean, and it was two weeks before they saw the Bay. Old Captain had slept none for a half-dozen watches, keeping deck and course in the cold light of his gray eyes. Hurricane and the lower Fox chanted their usual chorus with the sea as the ships went by. The hills looked on with wonted silence. When they swung into the reach, every islander began to cry, "North Haven!" but stopping, stared with blank surprise.

The little farms lay black upon the tilted landscape. Every house was burned to the ground.

"The war has come!" some one muttered; another, "The English have been here!"

Something crossed Old Captain's face, moving the rocky features into an awful terror, but passing, left them inscrutable as before. He made the little harbor, and anchoring, took all the islanders, and, alone with them, went ashore. They found nothing—not a baby's shoe, or a woman's handkerchief. It was like inquiring of a grave. At dusk they returned, every man climbing heavily upon the deck, and pacing out his watch in the dumb way of man's sorrow.

The next day Old Captain piped all hands aft, and spoke:

"Lads," he began, "we are going to fight England. Some of you have fought her before, others will quickly take the chance to revenge the cruelty of her press-gangs. If there are any here who love England more than we have cause to do," and he stretched his hand convulsively toward the fire-scarred island, "I will put them aboard the *Sally* and let them go."

There were no cheers, but the sombre silence was too like Old Captain's temper to be misunderstood, and when the *Sally* sailed, only the prisoners went in her. When she was gone, they overhauled the Englishman, Graybeard, now first mate,



scraping off the original name with his own hands, and afterwards recleping the ship with hot iron, the smoking pen in his hand spelling another *Sally*. Recleped and clean, they caught a midnight wind, and, hurried by it, had left the Bay, the islands, and the hills far behind by morning, and in another day made Boston.

There, Old Captain learned that the English occupied everything to the Bay, and that his wife and colony, if alive, were probably aboard some prison-ship at Halifax or the Bermudas. As everything that could fight was welcome, there was no difficulty obtaining *letters of marque*. Armed with them, and better of shot and powder in full lockers, he cleared again, provisioned for two months.

The course was north by east, Old Captain minded to try Halifax first. Off Monhegan, the third day, they fell in with a lime-coaster, shot-ripped and yawning, with five cutlashed dead men in her scup-

pers, and a gutted cabin held by another gaping body. Thin feathers of gray smoke blew from the hatches, accompanied by crackling sibilance. Sewing up the dead in their own sails, with doleful countenances they buried them with shot for company, and went on, leaving the vessel to the fires. The ship was kept in silence that afternoon, but when they caught the pirate Englishman in the dusk, the gunners pumped her with incessant shot until she sank with every man aboard. Afterward they put the crews of their prizes ashore or into boats, but always sunk the ships—"cleaning the sea," as they hoarsely said among themselves.

All was not easy fighting. Half-way between Cape Sable and Manan they ran against an Englishman of sixteen guns anchored in the fog. Both were surprised, but instantly took hold, their grapples clashing as they fell together. It was too sudden for the guns, so they



fought with singing cutlasses and knives. For a quarter of an hour the dead fell on their ship's deck or into the sea between. Up and down the rails the agonizing struggle surged. A dozen of the *Sally's* crew were under foot, Graybeard among them. The second mate's sword hand was gone, Old Captain's face was split; but the men kept their hold, panting, streaked with blood and sweat, pressed by men as resolute as themselves. They would have died hanging to each other's throats, but suddenly Graybeard stood up from among the dead, with face awful as a ghost's, and cried, "Your captain and the *Sally*!" When he heard Graybeard, Old Captain flung his cutlass to the Englishman, and with great blows of naked fists opened a way through which his mad men followed him to victory, winning it before death-struck Graybeard dropped from the bloody rail.

They kept this ship for another and better *Sally*, burying the second of the name with her great-hearted dead in state upon her deck, Old Captain himself ripping a plank from her bottom to let in the loving sea.

When the fog lifted they made sail again, and keeping from shore far enough to be unseen, anchored a day or two later off Halifax, waiting for dark. With nightfall they made the harbor, and ran alongside the prison-ship, that cursed craft, familiar with the one-time Englishman's lines, thinking nothing of such action. Before her officers found their mistake her deck swarmed with the *Sally's* men, and they were tied up in gagged silence. But wife nor islanders were on the ship, and Old Captain, pale as death, ordered his men back upon the *Sally*, the whole thing being done so quickly no prisoner was aware of its significance. All aboard, the *Sally* bore about, and crowding sail, escaped, being far from the offing when a booming gun told the alarm.

Aware he must be at the Bermudas before despatches conveyed the story of his audacity, Old Captain set a straight course, and never reefed a sail. The second day out he ordered the ship to be put into original shape. Among the former captain's papers he had found, upon examination, one ordering the commander of the Bermuda prison-ship to turn over a certain number of his prisoners for transportation to England. Em-

boldened by this discovery, he resolved to play the Englishman and demand the execution of the order for his own advantage. The crew, taken into his confidence, soon had the ship looking as she did the day they ran against her between Cape Sable and Manan. Many of them were already togged in the enemy's clothes, and enough were found for all. They would run the chance of meeting old friends of the former officers, but the story of the fight, of which there were plenty of tokens about the ship, could explain their taking off. A worse danger was recognition by the prisoners, provided those they sought were found. This emergency they must wait, and did, remembering they could always fight.

The ticklish adventure went through without a hitch. They reached the Bermudas in a week, threaded St. George's narrow passage in blazing mid-day, and dropped their anchors under the fortress's guns as if in love with them. The Englishman and her officers had been strangers at Bermuda, but Old Captain took no unnecessary chances, hurrying his business with close-mouthed despatch. The islanders were there, and he received them under his own eye, but with such apparent savagery the broken-hearted creatures did nothing to attract attention.

"That is all," the English officer in charge reported when the third boat-load was aboard.

"All!" Old Captain hoarsely cried, for his wife and children had not come. "Was there not another woman and her children in this party?" Seeing the officer's surprise, and instantly realizing his mistake, he gathered himself together, and continued, with hard voice, "Some report of the affair at North Haven reached Halifax, and I do not mind telling you I know the woman."

"Ah!" exclaimed the officer. "I am sorry; but we received a special requisition for her, and she was sent, the day before you came, in the *Petrel*"—naming a vessel of twice as many guns as Old Captain's.

Grandfather bowed, but said no more, and his features were as silent of emotion.

When the officer had taken leave they hove anchor, and making sail, moved slowly out of port, saluting as they went. Outside, the islanders fell into one another's arms.



er's arms with tears, and there were many low-voiced narratives and wan smiles, joy going quietly in the presence of Old Captain's sorrow.

"Men," he said, to their inquiring looks, "some of you saw me win my wife, others know her as they know me, and love her more. You have found your wives, and I am going to find mine, in the *Petrel*, in England, or"—and his face darkened in their sight—"among the dead."

The *Petrel* had the advantage of two days' start, but Old Captain hoped her officers' ignorance of the chase would allow him to overtake her. Gales the *Petrel* would close-haul to meet, he rode heavy-sailed. His ship strained under such driving, every rope and timber groaning fearfully; but her suffering was song to him, and he urged her on, his daring crew bending canvas to the reeling spars in winds all knew might blow spars and themselves away.

When the *Petrel's* peak pricked the horizon, as it did after a week of the mad racing, and her bulk slowly rose to view, Old Captain headed for her in stern silence, as if he meant to run her down. The gunners wonderingly waited by their pieces. A half-dozen huddled officers on the *Petrel* showed their surprise at unanswered greetings, the English flag in the *Sally's* rigging forbidding fire.

Old Captain held the wheel himself, and with that subtle sympathy between all

drivers and driven things, steadied his vessel's chase. They closed. The *Sally* crept past the *Petrel's* stern, along her side, and touched. At the touch the English token fell upon the *Sally's* deck, and an American ran up in its place. Ordering the grapples, Old Captain let go the wheel, and leaped upon the *Petrel's* deck, alone.

"You have a woman and three children from the Bermuda prison-ship?" he demanded of the *Petrel's* first officer.

"Yes," that dazed individual replied.

"Hand them over in three minutes, or I will blow you out of the water!" And the *Sally's* gunners lit their matches at the word.

The helpless officers could do nothing but obey.

When his wife was in his arms, and still upon the *Petrel's* deck, Old Captain ordered them to spike their own guns. Whether under terrific spell, or in paralysis of fear, the thing was done. Saluting sarcastically, Old Captain returned to the *Sally*, leading his wife and children. The grapples were let go. He ordered the *Petrel* to make way, and coolly watched her off while his crew took turns taunting her and madly cheering him.

They sailed at once for Boston. Leaving wives and children there, Old Captain and his islanders set out to restore their lost fortunes. How they found them, their battles, the names of their dead, are part of the unwritten history of privateering.

After the war, those left came back to North Haven and built these low-walled houses, now grayer than the sea. Some staid ashore, Old Captain among them for a time; but the wandering came on him in a little, and he refitted, this time

for deep-water voyages. While grandmother lived, he always wintered here. After she died, he rarely landed anywhere, daringly tempting the stormiest seas, as if he sought a grave.

Where his grave is, no man knows.

